Discussion by Kurt Riezler

It is not easy to comment briefly on these three papers, which, touching on fundamental problems of human existence, are concerned with the most paradoxical of all modern philosophers—and this at a moment when his numerous paradoxes flicker ambiguously as a rapidly moving history moves the thoughts of man.

Mr. de Huszar wants to differentiate some of our connotations of "will to power" from its meanings in Nietzsche. He is certainly right in insisting that Nietzsche's emphasis is upon "strength" and "overcoming resistance." I doubt, however, that this leads very far. Strength too is a rather broad term. It seems to me that Nietzsche, with one hand, sets up the "will to power" as the ultimate measure of good and bad; and with the other assesses this same will to power by other measures of moral and esthetic evaluation, thereby "measuring" his measure. This may be one of his paradoxes. There are different ways of removing this contradiction and arriving at an apparent consistency. Yet the critic of literary style, applying to Nietzsche the hidden standards of criticism, of which Nietzsche himself is a past master, will make no such attempt: he will discern that Nietzsche, applying the two measures, speaks in two voices.

The voice of the Nietzsche who proclaims the will to power as the fundamental drive and measure of good and bad is high-pitched, strident, strained—we sense a certain convulsive effort, a cramp in his style. The tone of the Nietzsche who within this will to power analyzes and differentiates, is different: here he molds the German language to serve a gentle and natural voice as an instrument of expression; here is one of the greatest writers who has ever written in German—of extreme sensitivity, delicacy, richness, and vivacity. Now and then the two voices seem to blend—we sense an enormous inner tension, sometimes still admirable, sometimes painful. Toward the end of his conscious life the cleavage becomes more and more manifest—in his first voice he violates those subtle standards of good taste and human attitudes his second voice was so eloquent in establishing.

Mr. de Huszar quotes Nietzsche's distinction between those philosophers who philosophize out of their defects and those who philosophize out of their riches. I think Nietzsche said "the riches of their gratitude." We might apply this distinction to Nietzsche

himself and his two voices. Speaking in the first voice, he philosophizes out of his defects; in the second, out of his riches. However, his defects and his riches both spring from one source: his extreme gentleness, sensitivity, vulnerability. His description of his father, who died young, holds good for himself. He too was hardly fit to live, and certainly not at all "to become hard." Thus in the one voice he protects himself against his own sensitiveness, whose riches he unfolds; in the other, tension pervades his writing; the two voices become part of his style, the corresponding two yardsticks, part of his thought.

Finding myself in general agreement with Mr. Morris, I put a question mark after only one point. Mr. Morris is right: Nietzsche cannot serve as guide to a modern "comprehensive man," whatever kind of man that is. Though Nietzsche's "Dionysian" man seems to me a little broader, and reaches far into what Mr. Morris calls the Apollonian and Promethean way—Nietzsche did not want—he would even hate—to serve as such a guide. His will to destruction would probably encompass this "comprehensive" modern man. We should not underestimate the thoroughness of this will to destruction of the modern world and the modern man.

To analyze this will, we must distinguish between a personal will and the conviction that this modern world of ours is going to destroy itself—Nietzsche would probably tell us that we are still in the initial phase of this process of self-destruction. In 1880—in the midst of a complacent world society which was still perfectly sure of itself—he sees civilization moving toward a catastrophe. He predicts "wars as there have never been wars on earth." Yet the "will to destruction" does not merely accept and bow to something we now call a "trend," and eagerly comply with. Nietzsche wills it—and not merely because it is a "trend"; when we ask and search for reasons we find another of his paradoxes—these reasons are moral, even religious. The moralist demands that history, the world, even God be "justified"—*gerechtfertigt werde.* The modern world cannot be "justified." The word recurs perpetually throughout his writings; the demand for justification guides his thinking. Even when—*das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend,* as Goethe says—he turns to the Greeks—he craves justification. This demand is a religious impulse, profoundly Christian, totally un-Greek.

With your permission, I should like to insert a few remarks concerning the relation of Nietzsche to the Greeks, and in due course turn to the doctrine of eternal recurrence, of which Mr. Löwith has given us such a penetrating analysis.

Nietzsche, in searching for justification, asks the Greeks an un-Greek question. The Greeks, at least before what Nietzsche calls their "decadence," did not ask that question, and therefore give no answer to it. Their answer is implied in their silence. Nietzsche senses that answer, but never makes it his own. It is a simple answer. It is that the question is wrong. The Greeks never felt that the world, history, nature, or the eternal images they called "Gods" demand or need justification. Nor did any of the later men who came nearest the Greeks. Goethe did not. Nor did Shakespeare, even in his deepest melancholy. Nature needs no justification. She is. They accepted the way of things—with a reverence and humility that, though humility is a Christian virtue, no Christian ever succeeded in learning from the Greeks, as the Christian doctrine of man's place in creation bars such humility. If the Greeks had ever talked in terms of justification, they would probably have advised the eager justifier of God to justify himself—as far as he could in elated moments of action, knowledge, and gratitude—by the beauty of the songs he sings or the excellence of the laws he gives or whenever a ray of sun, as Pindar says, glints over the crest of the waves in that dark sea which is the life of man. An attempt to justify the Gods is but arrogance in mortal man. Nietzsche, profoundly modern, was not naïve enough ever to be a pagan. Yet he knew more about the Greeks than anyone else, and it may even be that his knowledge —a knowledge by longing and desire—would have been less eloquent had he been naïve.

I am grateful for learning from Mr. Löwith that the Christian Fathers also treated the doctrine of eternal recurrence as the pagan counterpart to the Christian God-created cosmos. Mr. Löwith alludes to the difference between Nietzsche's notion of this eternal recurrence and that of the pagans. Though the difference seems negligible when we confront both notions with the Christian cosmos, the story it tells is important enough, and illustrates Nietzsche's relation to the Greeks. The ancient cyclical notion of time, originally an humble acceptance of the cycle of birth and death, transferred to cosmic periods, is as natural and naïve as

Nietzsche's eternal recurrence is artificial—derived as it is from a dubious play with infinity and the specific causality of modern classical physics. No Greek ever adhered to the infinite repetition of every fact and event to the last detail, and would hardly have seen any reason to do so, as Nature and her ways remain the same in all their eternally mutable manifestations. I do not think the Greeks ever demanded that man "love" his fate. I think I am not mistaken in sensing here again the lack of naïveté, the convulsive effort—as an expression of the craving for and despair of justifying what neither can nor need be justified. An attitude alien to the Greek mind, and implicitly warned against by Apollo himself, whose "know thyself," carved on his temple at Delphi from time immemorial, has none of its later connotations, but simply tells man to respect the boundaries set mortal man.

Nietzsche says somewhere that philosophy is the talk of the very great from peak to peak across the centuries and over the valleys in which the many dwell—and among the many he included, of course, us, the professors of philosophy. If we accept this notion of a history of philosophy outside history and ask whether Nietzsche's own voice will be heard in this peak-to-peak discourse, we might dare answer both No and Yes. No, so far as he shouts in a high-pitched voice his magic words—superman, blond beast, the death of God, eternal recurrence; to be misused by a mass society he despises—that means all the things current discussion in the valleys of our own age considers the core of his tale. They belong to a particular historical situation, and will not be listened to in any talk across the centuries. We might answer Yes, so far as the richness of his delicate soul speaks in a gentle voice, embracing the entire scale of man's utmost misery and deepest happiness. Here he is one of the greatest knowers of man—the most fearless of inquirers into the queer logic of the human heart, both individual and social—and this voice may still be heard in a time when the modern man of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the plight of the Christian of an evaporated Christianity, has been forgotten.

If, however, we repudiate such an ahistorical notion of the history of philosophy—and those of us who are believers in history will repudiate it—and confront Nietzsche with the present historical moment, we can do it in one of two ways, and should do it in both: telling him what in the present moment we have to say to him and asking him what he would say to us. We might show

him the picture of the European Continent, his transnational home —the type of men who have exploited the power of the magic words he coined—*das missrathene Tier* parading as *das wohlgeratene Tier*—the subhuman parody of the superman, who combined in himself what Nietzsche deemed man's three greatest stupidities: nationalism, antisemitism, and Wagner's romantic swindle. We would have a great deal to say. But he too might have something to say: the mass society enmeshed in the sinister necessities of the industrial age, its citizen—the night of blindness descending, Science writ larger and larger, yet man's knowledge of man rapidly shrinking, the "last man" seeking nothing more than the petty happiness of his security, moving toward the subhuman model of a man who is the mere manipulated robot of conditioned responses in basic English—with no one knowing who will and should be the future human, subhuman, or superhuman manipulators of manipulated man. Both we and Nietzsche will have a great deal more to say—things embarrassing to both him and us.

If this is the ironic paradox of this centenary, this discussion, dealing with this paradox, is to both his and our credit. We would hardly discuss it if he were his parody or we already his "last man."

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